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EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
Charleston, Illinois

news

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December 7, 1990

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

EASTERN MARKS AFRO-AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER ANNIVERSARY

CHARLESTON, IL.--Eastern Illinois University President Stan Rives joined faculty, staff and students in marking the 20th Anniversary of EIU's Afro-American Cultural Center during a brief ceremony Friday (December 7).

The Center, located on 7th Street, held its opening ceremony December 13, 1970, and since then has served as a location where positive aspects of cultural diversity are presented as a catalyst to bring about positive attitudes on the part of all members of the University community.

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James E. Johnson, Assistant Dean, Student Personnel Services, paid special tribute to graduate assistant and director of the Center for 1990-91 Rosalba Najera of Chicago, and senior Sheena Reid of Oak Lawn, president of Eastern's Black Student Union, for their key roles in the success of the Center this year.

He also recognized Elmer "Jack" Pullen for his leadership in working toward the establishment of the Center in 1970, while a student at Eastern in the late '60's. Pullen, named the University's "Boss of the Year" in 1989, is currently a Financial Aids Counselor.

In his remarks, Rives praised Johnson's accomplishments during his 20 years at Eastern and noted that he will be missed following his planned retirement next summer.

Rives predicted that the cultural makeup of our nation is going to be very different in the next century and praised the work of the Task Force on Enhancing Minority Participation, which has made 158 recommendations for improving cultural diversity on the campus. He said one of the reasons the Center was established was to expand educational opportunities for minorities, as well as the cultural opportunities for those who aren't minorities.

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He also praised William Warfield, Visiting Professor for Cultural Diversity, for his outstanding work with Eastern's students and Johnetta Jones, Eastern's Director of Minority Student Affairs and Afro-American Studies, for her work with the Minority Admissions Program. He said the challenge is not only admission, but retention of minority students.

Glenn Williams, Vice-President for Student Affairs, noted that at the opening of the Center, then-President Quincy Doudna said, "I hope this is not only a ribbon-cutting, but the cutting of any separation that exists on this campus between colors."

Also praising the Center was Brigitte Chen, International Student Advisor. She said the International students use and appreciate the Center and cited several examples, including a recent Malaysian wedding, celebration of the Chinese New Year, and the daily use of the Center by Moslem students for their prayers.

"I hope that the next 20 years will be as progressive as the last 20," Johnson said.